



# Purpose and Passion at the crossroads of Diversity and Innovation

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**When asked what is your purpose, we often hear responses like**

To leave a lasting legacy for the next generation

To accumulate wealth

To make an impact on society

I am still searching for my purpose

My purpose is to get out of college and get a J.O.B.

the rubber ball, they scuff, crack or even break from lack of attention, lack of care, lack of time.

As I travel through this season of my life I pause to share with you my observations on purpose and passion at the crossroads of diversity and innovation and the importance of balance. I have had the pleasure of coming in contact with hundreds of students, young adults, early career entrants and those in the autumn of their years. Remarkably they all share the desire to contribute, to make something of themselves but so often many of them seem to wonder endlessly from position to position, job to job never really happy, never seeming to be fulfilled.

This lack of fulfillment can cause poor job performance, lack of participation in career development plans and poor relationships on the job and off the job, their seems to be a connection between performance on the job and life outside of work. I have observed that when balance exist, harmony between work and outside interest, relationships, community involvement, the individual is better equipped to respond to the normal pressures that come from all corners of ones life experience, especially those on the job but also natural disasters. I have made the observation that *purpose*

*in life* and a passion for what you do, once realized gives focus and direction to our actions. I have also come to believe that when purpose and passion meet at the intersection of gifts/talents you are on your way to a life of unexpected joy and fulfillment. You are living what you are supposed to be living. You are in that special place, a zone. A place where diversity of thought, new ideas and innovations are free to exist and even flourish, a place where you are totally engaged and free to engage others, to accept the ideas of others with total respect without regard for the package these ideas are delivered in. You can do this because you very content in the skin you are in. You are at peace, not intimidated by others, on the contrary, welcoming the ideas of others. It is at this place, this moment in time that the foundation for growth, personally, professionally and organizationally is most likely to occur. It is at this place that we are energized to be more creative. We wake up early thinking of ways to improve what we are doing to make a greater contribution. We are at last happy with ourselves and make those around us feel equally happy. They feel comfortable in coming to us with all their "what if ideas and why not try it this way". The organization can thrive

**T**he recent events in the Gulf region which I call disaster 1 and the aftermath of what happened which I call disaster 2 should be a signal to all of us that our lives require a strong sense of balance between work, family, relationships, spiritually and health. A university commencement speaker referred to these five areas as balls that must be juggled. He goes on to describe these balls as all made of glass with the exception of one, the work ball. This ball seems to be resilient, to bounce back, to return to its original form, it is made of rubber yet we spend all our time, our lives trying to perfect this ball while sacrificing the other four balls. The other four balls are not quite as fortunate as

without blind spots or untapped use of resources. Everyone is listening and open for the next best transformation. Diversity and its' next of kin inclusion, not only have a seat at the table but both are a part of the main course and listed on the menu because the palettes of those around the table have been enriched by this culinary experience. Innovation and creativity can now be the desert that everyone enjoys.

If innovation is the end product of our most successful organizations and institutions then diversity in all its forms and packages is the fuel that will continue to energize and drive our progress in the 21st century.

As soon to be graduates you are challenged to find that place first within yourselves, a place that allows you to combine your purpose and your passion. You are challenged to understand the importance of balancing the five balls. You are challenged to find or for some to create the opportunities that bring you to your purpose and passion. I believe that

once you are at this place you are closer to realizing the impact of diversity of ideas, diversity of friendships, diversity of cultures, diversity in all its forms and its impact on you. Diversity when viewed through lens that are not foggy or narrow but free to understand and respect others and their ideas opens us up to see a world of innovation and creativity. Diversity is further enhanced if we have lived in different communities, different parts of the world, engaged others who are different from us in dialogue, if we have taken advantage of international exchange programs or summer study abroad opportunities. These ideas and opportunities require early career planning, starting with a self assessment of your skills and abilities, followed by an exploration of career related information, informational interviews, internships like INROADS. We must then evaluate all these inputs of experiences, ideas, discussions and try to make the most intelligent decision based on recognition of our options, interest, purpose and passion. This foundation will

prepare us for global competition in a global market, a marketplace in which you are not only in competition with the individual in the next class or next dormitory but in a class on a continent many miles away.

Make the most of your purpose and passion and enjoy the fruits of diversity and innovation.



**Edward Bullock** was appointed Vice President of Diversity for L'Oréal USA in July 2002. He oversees the company's diversity initiatives as they

pertain to its workforce, vendors, internship programs and community relations. L'Oréal USA has greatly expanded its diversity efforts under Mr. Bullock's leadership. His responsibilities include reviewing Human Resources representation for women and under represented groups, supplier diversity, development of multicultural advertising strategy, minority philanthropic efforts and all diversity and inclusion training programs.